

Are Our Top Journals Becoming More International?

**Daniela Rosenstreich, Charles Sturt University
Ben Wooliscroft, University of Otago**

Abstract

The study examines the editorial boards of ten of marketing's top journals over three time periods. The analysis covers the size of the editorial boards, the location of board members, and the network between boards. The study is significant because the composition of journal editorial boards has been shown to be linked to the degree of heterogeneity in the material published, and publication in highly ranked journals is important in assessments of research performance. Furthermore, longitudinal studies of editorial board composition are rare. Results reveal that the size of the editorials boards has grown substantially since 2004, while the degree of overlap between the boards has remained consistent. There was a small increase in international participation overall in 2008, but some journals had reduced international membership. While further research is recommended, the results provide assistance authors outside the USA wishing to maximise potential for a positive reception to article submissions.

Introduction

In 2006 a special issue of the *European Business Review* explored various issues relating to academic journals. The lead article in that issue examined (*inter alia*) the composition of the editorial boards of ten leading marketing journals in 2004 and the authorship of articles in those journals over a two year period (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft 2006a). The authors concluded from the investigation that academics based outside the USA were poorly represented on editorial boards, and also as authors within those journals. The study also concluded that a network existed between editorial boards of the top journals, and that members of that network publish regularly in the top journals. Further analysis was later conducted by the same authors using the 2006 editorial boards of 37 marketing journals and produced similar results (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft 2006b).

The current study uses the common aspects of methodology and data from the two previous studies, and conducts analysis on new data collected from the 2008 editorial boards. The object is to analyse and compare the boards from the three time periods and determine whether the composition of our discipline's top editorial boards has changed over recent years.

Background

Research into scholarly journals is highly relevant given that academic success depends on research output in terms of published articles (Ganesh, Chandy, and Henderson 1990; Heischmidt and Gordon 1993; Luke and Doke 1987; Rotfeld 1997a, 1997b; Svensson 2008). The importance of studying journals is even clearer given that academics around the world are commonly assessed based on the ranking of the journals in which they publish (Geary, Marriott, and Rowlinson 2004; Koojarenprasit et al. 1998; Rosenstreich 2007; Theoharakis and Hirst 2002; Zinkhan and Leigh 1999). Given this focus on journal rankings, it is a concern that Australasian academics do not feature often as authors in the very top journals of the marketing discipline (Cheng, Chan and Chan 2003; Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft 2005).

The top marketing journals are predominantly USA-based and dominated by USA-based editorial board members (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft 2006a, 2006b; Svensson 2005, 2006). It has been shown that USA-based journals have less geographically varied content than journals based in other regions (Czinkota 2000; Lukka and Kasanen 1996; Newell et al. 2002; Ozbilgin 2004; Walters 2001); and that authors from outside the USA experience difficulties in getting published in USA marketing journals (Czinkota 2000; Easton and Easton 2003; Homburg 2003; Walters 2001).

With a connection evident between journals having USA-based editorial boards and low levels of international content, analysis of the composition of the editorial boards of the discipline's top journals is important.

Method

The journals selected for the study are those commonly assessed as the top journals in the marketing discipline (Browne and Becker, 1991; Coe and Weinstock, 1983; Easton and Easton, 2003; Heischmidt and Gordon, 1993; Hult, Neese and Bashaw, 1997; Jobber and Simpson, 1988; Koojarenprasit et al. 1998; Luke and Doke, 1987; Mort et al. 2004; Pecotich and Everett, 1989; Social Science Citation Index 2006; Theoharakis and Hirst, 2002): *Journal of Marketing (JM)*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)*, *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, *Journal of Consumer Research (JCR)*, *Marketing Science (MS)*, *Journal of Advertising (JA)*, *Journal of Advertising Research (JAR)*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)*, *Journal of Retailing (JR)*, and *Journal of Business Research (JBR)*. These ten titles also featured in the research that this study seeks to extend (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft 2006a, 2006b)

A database was compiled of the editorial board members for the journals in 2004, 2006 and 2008. The names of editorial review board members, associate, emeritus and consulting editors were included. Where the identity of a board member was unclear, details were checked by a search of institution web pages. Location was based on the country of permanent employment as at June 2008 – this approach is consistent with the approach used in other studies (Cheng et al. 2003; Czinkota 2000).

Network analysis software was used to explore the connections and overlaps between the boards. Analysis was carried out using Agna, a freeware social network analysis package for Mac OS X, with UCInet employed to produce graphical displays of the networks.

Results

Editorial Board Size

In 2004 there were 965 editorial board positions across the ten journals and this had reduced to 931 by 2006. However, in 2008 the boards of the journals had swelled in number to 1208 board positions. *JAR* was the only journal to maintain editorial board size between 2006 and 2008, with the remainder of journals increasing the number of board members. The most significant change in board size between 2006 and 2008 was a 286% increase in the size of the *IJRM* board. The same journal had also experienced the most significant size change between 2004 and 2006 but in that case it was a reduction to 51% of the 2004 size.

As would be expected with the changes in board size, there were also changes in the number of individuals involved: In 2004, there were 667 individuals, in 2006, 649, and in 2008, 830

people. (The total number of people involved on the editorial boards is less than the number of board members because many individuals are involved in more than one journal board).

The relationship between the number of board positions and individuals was relatively constant across the three time periods because the proportions of people serving on multiple boards remained relatively stable. There was a slight reduction in the number of people serving on only one board between 2004 and 2006, but this rose again by 2008. In 2008 there were higher proportions of people serving on three to six boards. It is interesting to note that in 2008 the ranks of those on four or more of the boards of the ten journals swelled to 31 people (there had previously been only 15-16), and that Jeffrey Inman, and V. Kumar (both based in USA) now join Steenkamp in serving on six different boards.

Only two of the twenty-four individuals serving on four or more boards were based outside the USA in 2004 and 2006: Dekimpe in Belgium and Steenkamp in The Netherlands (Steenkamp moved to a permanent position at the University of North Carolina between 2006/8). However, by 2008 there were three more non-USA based academics on four or more boards: Peter J Danaher, Australia, Eitan Muller, Australia & UK, and Peter Verhoef, Netherlands. (The overall geographic distribution of the board members is explored in more detail in the following section).

The network between journals' board membership identified in previous research (Rosenstreich & Wooliscroft, 2006a) was also evident in the current study. Strong network connections were particularly evident between the boards of *JM*, *JMR*, *MS*, and *JAMS*. A thorough depiction of the network analysis is not possible within the constraints of this paper, but some examples serve to illustrate the strong connections between boards. For instance, the overlap between *JMR* and *MS* in all of the time periods amounted to half of the *JMR* board also serving on the *MS* board. In 2008 a third of the *IJRM* board also serve on the board of *JMR*, 35% of the *IJRM* board are also on the *MS* board, and between 20-30% of the *IJRM* board are also on the *JM* and *JCR* boards.

It is interesting to note that *JCR*, *JA*, *JAR*, and *JBR* have become consistently less connected to the other boards over the four year period. *JM* also became less connected to the other boards between 2004 and 2006 when the editorial board changed under Roland Rust's tenure as editor, but *JM* re-asserted itself within the network with the new board structure in 2008.

Location of Editorial Board Members

A review of the locations of editorial board members revealed that most boards were comprised predominantly of USA-based academics (see Table 2 below). In 2004 and 2006 85% of all board members were based in the USA with Europe a distance second at 6-7%. By 2008 the proportion of North America-based board members has dropped to 78.9%, with increases in reviewers and editors located in Asia, Australasia, Europe and UK/Ireland.

Table 1: Location of Editorial Board Members, 2004, 2006 & 2008

Region/Country	2004	2006	2008
Asia	1.3%	1.0%	4.3%
Australasia	1.3%	1.3%	1.8%
Canada	3.3%	4.2%	3.9%
Europe	6.7%	6.3%	7.7%
Middle East	0.4%	1.0%	0.8%
South America	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
UK/Ireland	1.3%	1.4%	2.5%
USA	85.3%	84.9%	78.9%

An analysis by journal revealed that in 2004 and 2006, half the journals had 90% or more of their board based in the USA (*JCR*, *JAMS*, *JR*, *JA* and *JAR*), with *JR* and *JA* at 95%. Only *IJRM* had a significant proportion of board members located outside the USA with 35% coming from Europe and small numbers from other regions.

Between 2004 and 2006 there were reductions in the level of USA board members for three journals: *MS* (-4%), *JM* (-3%) and *JA* (-2%). By 2008, there were further reductions in the level of USA-based board members for those journals: *JA* (-9%), *MS* (-2%), and *JM* (-1%), and also reductions in USA based editorial board members for two other journals: *JBR* (-7%), *JAMS* (-6%). On the other hand, between 2006-2008 both *JMR* and *IJRM* increased the proportion of USA-based board members by 4%.

Asian involvement on editorial boards was the other major change over the four years, with increases in the following journals: *JBR* (+6%), *IJRM* (+3%), *JAMS* (+3%), *JA* (+1%), and *MS* (+1%). However, Asian participation reduced for the *JR* (-1%), and *JMR* (-1%) boards. Given the small overall Asian representation, these are substantial changes.

Australasian board membership grew for some journals between 2004-2008: *JA* (+4%), *JMR* (+2%), *JM* (+1%), *JCR* (+1%), and *JBR* (+1%). While these are still small proportions of the overall board, the changes equate to the Australasian board membership having doubled for these journals. On the other hand, the (already small) Australasian membership of other boards has reduced since 2004: *JAR* (-3%), *JR* (-1%), and *IJRM* (-1%).

Discussion

The growth in size of the editorial boards is notable and it would be interesting to hypothesise on reasons for it, but conclusions cannot be drawn from the research conducted thus far. Whatever the cause, it is to be hoped that the increased pool of board reviewers may help speed the dissemination of marketing knowledge through faster review processes.

The boards of the ten journals show strong network connections across all three time periods. It has been suggested that getting published is more difficult for those outside the social networks that surround journals (Easton and Easton 2003; McNamee and Willis 1994; Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft, 2006a). The idea of social contact with editors has long been acknowledged as useful strategy (Twedt 1977), but need not imply underhand dealings – discussing research ideas with editors or reviewers enables feedback before submitting an article (Perry *et al.* 2003).

Consistent with the results of similar studies discussed earlier, the analysis of the location of editorial board members revealed a high proportion of USA-based board members. There was little change between 2004 and 2006, but there was a small shift towards more international membership in 2008. Australasian membership made moderate gains, while Asian participation saw significant increases over the last two years. However, overall board membership of these highly ranked journals remains far from international, with just under a third of members coming from outside the USA

It could be argued that foreign input into editorial boards comes via foreign scholars who choose to work in the USA. However, for most OECD countries in 2003/04, two to four scholars held positions in USA universities for every 100 that remained employed in their home country, furthermore the proportion in the USA is said to be even lower for the business disciplines (OECD 2006). It is also sometimes assumed that the population of English-speaking marketing academics outside the USA is small. While it is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the total number of marketing academics in the world, statistics on the number of academic staff in various nations are available (OECD, 2006, 2007; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2004), as is data on English language use (Gordon, 2005). Combining this data provides an estimate that just over half of all English speaking academics are based in the USA. This estimate is supported by the Academy of Marketing Science membership list which has 57% of members based at USA universities (AMS, 2005).

The question of whether a change in the profile of editorial boards has impact on the material published is yet to be proven. Previous research indicates that the content of the top journals is heavily weighted towards USA-based authors when the same journals are also dominated by USA-based reviewers and editors (Rosenstreich and Wooliscroft, 2005). However, this does not establish a causal relationship and further investigation is required.

In the absence of a full longitudinal study, *JM* provides an interesting case study. In 2005, Roland Rust became the editor of *JM*. As previously noted, there was a 3% reduction in USA-based board members between 2004 (Pre-Rust) and 2006. Rust stated that there will be “no bias against non-U.S. authors or non-U.S. data” (2006, p. 1). In light of this change in editorial policy a tally of articles accepted since Rust became editor was carried out and compared to the content for *JM* prior to commencement of Rust’s editorship. As shown in Table 2 below, there appears to be a drop in the level of USA-based authorship within *JM*. It is not possible to determine whether the change is a result of the changed editorial board, or Rust's editorial policy, or a combination of both. With another new editor in 2008, a review of the content in 2009 could provide an interesting comparison.

Table 2: *JM* Content Analysis – Incidence of USA Authors

Journal issues		Articles	Articles with <u>no</u> USA authors		Articles with <u>≥ 1</u> USA authors		Articles with <u>all</u> USA authors	
<i>JM</i>	Vol.66:4 (2002) - 68:3 (2004)	69	3	4%	66	96%	54	78%
<i>JM</i>	Vol. 70:1 (2006) - 71:2 (2007)	68	7	10%	54	79%	42	62%

Conclusions

The analysis of the ten editorial boards during 2004, 2006 and 2008 reveals a substantial increase in the number of board positions across the ten journals. The level of overlaps between the boards however remained fairly constant and highlights the need for authors to seek to become part of those networks.

The level of international input into the editorial boards changed slightly in 2008 with a drop in USA members balanced by increases in Asian, Australian, European, and UK/Irish participation. Further research is required to determine whether changes in internationality in the compositions of editorial boards have any impact on the material published. The snapshot of *JM* suggests that it may.

This analysis of board composition has highlighted journals that may have become more likely to view international contributions favourably. This provides useful information for academic authors wishing to enhance their submission hit rate.

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